



Anna Caudill Peterson

◀ SFC Linda Riviera-Estacio, one of several liaison NCOs in the GSU's mobilization cell, gathers her parachute and prepares to leave Fort Bragg's Sicily Drop Zone.

Story by MAJ Jan Northstar

MORE than 150,000 Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers have been activated in response to the war on terrorism since Sept. 11, 2001, and the 2125th Garrison Support Unit — one of about a dozen GSUs nationwide — has been responsible for transitioning some 15,000 reserve-component soldiers to active duty since that time.

The unit, from Decatur, Ga., deployed on Sept. 28, 2001, to Fort Bragg, N.C., where its 350 soldiers processed many of the first Guard and Reserve units that responded to the terrorist attacks. Soldiers from the 2125th's military police detachment augmented Fort Bragg security personnel and MP units to provide force protection, and other GSU soldiers ensured that mobilized units arriving at Fort Bragg received everything they needed in preparation for deployment.

The GSU's headquarters followed on Oct. 15, to prepare for the expected influx of arriving reserve-component soldiers.

Home to the XVIII Airborne Corps, U.S. Army Special Operations Command and the 82nd Abn. Division, Fort Bragg can send troops to meet any crisis in a matter of hours. The 2125th plays a critical role in this mission by providing everything the incoming reserve-component soldiers need — from training and equipment to medical attention and legal and financial support.

"The key to success has been the 2125th GSU," said Fort Bragg garrison commander COL Tad Davis. "Without its presence at this crucial time, the mobilization of units wouldn't have been accomplished to

MAJ Jan Northstar is the public affairs officer for the 2125th GSU.

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standard. The 2125th has a unique capability and a wealth of experience in dealing with the reserve component.”

To date, the 2125th has readied some 200 units for deployment, he said.

Lessons Learned

Garrison-support units are the result of lessons learned during Operation Desert Shield, Davis said. During that time, deploying active-component units didn’t have the luxury of leaving behind the personnel who were essential to the continued operation of the home installation.

The GSUs were established to provide such basic infrastructure services as MPs, personnel and administration, finance, logistics, public works, training and operations, staff judge advocate, chaplain and public affairs.

When the 2125th formed at East Point, Ga., in 1994, its only mission was to be prepared to augment Fort Bragg if the XVIII ABC deployed. Today, said 2125th GSU commander COL Jeff Jacobs, the GSU’s mission is broader than augmenting the services of active-duty soldiers.

“We’re a brigade-level, command-and-control headquarters for mobilizing and demobilizing units, and we coordinate the mobilization process for the installation,” Jacobs said.

Taking Care of Soldiers

At Fort Bragg, the 2125th GSU and installation staff agencies operate the Mobilization Unit Inprocessing Center that coordinates with the advance parties of units notified of mobilization at Fort Bragg. Once units arrive, the GSU helps ensure the soldiers experience a seamless transition to active duty.

Soldiers mobilizing at Fort Bragg are guaranteed everything they need to deploy, Jacobs said, particularly fully mission-capable equipment. Every weapon, vehicle, generator, radio or night-vision device is inspected and repaired, if necessary, to ensure it works on the battlefield.

SFC Linda Riviera-Estacio is one of several liaison NCOs in the GSU’s mobilization cell. She and her coworkers guide troops through such various soldier-readiness processing stations as finance, medical and legal.

“I have helped process as many as 250 soldiers at one time through the SRPs,” said Riviera-Estacio, who greets each arriving group.

Basic combat refresher training is a key element of predeployment for many soldiers, said training NCO SSG Anthony Green. Reserve soldiers feel a lot more confident when they’ve had an opportunity to brush up on land navigation and marksmanship, he said.

Green also ensures the soldiers are proficient in the use of their weapons and nuclear, biological and chemical-protective equipment.

SPC Vida Kwarteng, a personnel-services specialist, has been in the Army Reserve for about four years. She was a hotel reservations clerk and college student when she was called up with the GSU.

“I have a much better understanding of my MOS and how to do my job, which is crucial to a soldiers’ career,” said Kwarteng, who monitors evaluations, making sure they’re completed on time and meet regulation criteria for the individual being rated.

Broad Service

The 2125th GSU’s first active-duty assignment was providing support to units mobilizing in support of Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom. At the same time, unit members are for the first time serving in key XVIII ABC staff positions. The unit also is proud of being able to send a number of soldiers to Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga. — a feat that is rare in Army Reserve units, Davis said. 🇺🇸

MAJ Jan Northstar



SSG Anthony Green instructs deploying soldiers on how to detect chemical agents in the field.